Thursday April 4th 1874

My dear Maria

Yours of the 10th came to day, telling me the news of my Son meeting Emma L Anderson, which I have written to Tom — Also the arrival in Rome so in fact I have nothing to tell you new

We have continued rain which set in on the day my Walter left, & my painting will not dry on account of the damp & I cannot go out except twice the doors so that I & my picture are in the dumps & I am obliged to have a new stove in the two rooms for me but for my picture — I began with great enthusiasm & my Madonna picture promises well

Rome is completely changed as the Pope shuts himself up & will not perform any of the fine ceremonies so that charm of Rome is much reduced tho' there remains the antiquities & the places — The English visitors have dropt off & I hear great lamentations from the artists that there are no orders — At the same time that I conclude the Consulship did my painting harm, yet as there few orders I should have been badly off if I had had to depend on it, as it is I have a pension for life

which small as it is, I could perhaps never have got from my painting – so I feel thankful that a merciful Providence has protected me, aye & even preserved me, for unless I could have indulged in the means of a cure (70 baths) I must have sunk under the malady

Poor Tom's case grieves me sadly, he has never been out this year, this is very hard, but the Spring may revive him & set him up a little

If the weather would let me go on with my painting I should be happy enough, but the damp & the dark have shut me up

I perceive from your last letter that you are suffering which gives me much concern, tho' you tell me that my good Arthur always remembers you every quarter, this is very kind of him

I shall write you from the sea side but direct me as usual, "Pal Poli, scala Dante" – then I should like to go & see you all & some of my numerous grandchildren (I believe 18) I often hear of your dear Claudia, she is a shadow, but yet she writes cheerfully – Eleanor scarce ever writes me, she is so busy with her two babies – I am now up at 6

my love to all Your loving brother Joe

I am anxious to hear about poor dear Tom & that the spring weather has set him up a little by letting him go out, even to have his Photo done

I am very comfortable now with the warm weather & think of going to Tolfa next month & taking to baths as usual, altho' I am well cared yet I can perceive that the slightest cold affects me, but I revel in the heat which begins to be smoaking

Pray tell about the dear Girls and their Mamma & also of Monte

Your loving brother Joe